

WORKERS WORLD

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MORATORIUM ON FORECLOSURES NOW!

Washington protest to target robber bankers

Special to Workers World

FIGHTING THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

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On 40th anniversary of assassination

KING'S LEGACY LIVES



Mumia Abu-Jamal on: Revs. King & Wright



Achilles heel of

NATO EXPANSION 9

WW in 1969

MURDER OF FRED HAMPTON 10



The newly formed Ad Hoc National Network to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions is hoping that its planned protest against the Mortgage Bankers Association's policy conference in Washington, D.C., on April 16 will be pivotal to launching a massive national campaign for an emergency moratorium on home foreclosures.

On April 16, buses, cars and vans from more than 20 states will be bringing people in to the capital for a 3 p.m. rally and demonstration in front of the MBA's two-day conference at the Washington Court Hotel, located at 525 New Jersey Ave. NW.

The Network, which has been joined by housing and social justice activists and groups across the country, is planning for the April 16 protest to be followed by locally coordinated demonstrations demanding that an immediate moratorium on all foreclosures and evictions be enacted by the government, at the state level and by Congress.

Several hundred mortgage bankers representing all of the major banks—including Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Bear Stearns, and JPMorgan Chase—will be attending the bankers conference.

The MBA's call to their Washington conference states: "It's time for Congress to hear from the real estate finance industry. Join your peers in Washington for the 2008 National Policy Conference, and speak to members of Congress about issues that directly affect your business."

In response to the bankers' call the Network to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions has launched a campaign directed at

Congress, demanding that members of Congress refuse to meet with delegations of mortgage bankers that will be descending on Capitol Hill during their conference to lobby against any government action that would in any way stop the foreclosure epidemic. More than 50,000 messages have been sent to members of the banking and finance committees of the Senate and the House telling them to refuse to meet with bankers until the MBA formally endorses a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions.

Commenting on mortgage related measures that Congress is debating, April 16 protest organizer Sharon Black stated: "The mortgage relief measures that the U.S. Senate is considering amount to half-measures that will not stop or even slow down the rate of roughly 8,000 home foreclosures each day. So far, congressional action to save homes is reminiscent of the kind of political posturing and cynical neglect that characterized the government's response to Hurricane Katrina three years ago."

Ms. Black said, "The major features of the so-called mortgage rescue package coming out of Congress involve providing counseling to workers who have lost their homes, along with tax breaks that appear to help bankers more than workers."

Jerome Goldberg, a Network organizer in Detroit, said: "Detroit is almost ground zero for the national housing depression. Entire neighborhoods have been destroyed by home foreclosures."

Mr. Goldberg added, "The Federal Reserve Bank promised bankers that it would do whatever was necessary to avoid bank failures, so we demand that government do whatever is necessary to stop home foreclosures; and that means, at a minimum, declaring a moratorium." □

BAILOUT PEOPLE NOT BANKERS



Demonstrate Against the MORTGAGE BANKER\$ ASSOCIATION ANNUAL POLICY CONFERENCE

Wed. APRIL 16 Washington, D.C.

3 p.m. WASHINGTON COURT HOTEL

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From Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row

Of ‘crazy uncles’ and kings

From a March 25 audio column. Go to www.prison-radio.org to hear more of Mumia’s columns.

It has been 40 years—a lifetime—since Martin Luther King Jr. was felled in Memphis, Tenn.

His life of committed activism and his martyrdom have left an indelible mark upon the world.

There were, indeed, echoes of him in Black and some white churches this past Easter, but also in what the corporate media has called “incendiary” speeches of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright.

Rev. Wright’s Black Liberation Theology runs like a chain from the life and practice of two prominent Black religious leaders of the 20th century, who left their imprint upon the soul and psyche of Rev. Wright (the Rev. Dr. Martin L. King and Minister Malcolm X).

Although condemned as “divisive,” “incendiary” and “outrageous” by the corporate and right-wing press, I found nothing of the sort to my ears. It actually reminded me of my youth, when, working at a white radio station, my boss called me into his office, and quietly asked me about the Rev. Leon Sullivan, one of the most prominent religious and business leaders in the country.

I can’t remember his question but the gist of it was that he and several other radio executives met with the man, and came away unimpressed. It taught me that people are deeply influenced by style, and some styles do not cross cultures well. I tried to communicate to him that Rev. Sullivan was a virtual lion in the community (indeed, his nickname was “the lion of Zion”—for the name of his church, Zion Baptist Church).

Different cultures have different styles of speech and communication.

I thought of this when the media-generated Wright controversy arose, when, initially, Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) suggested Wright was kind of like the crazy uncle that people invite to Thanksgiving, but really don’t take too seriously.

The life and example of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. also came to mind. And while King has been almost deified by most Americans, like most such men, their words are actually rarely read, and those who truly knew them are little heeded.

Theologist and historian, Dr. Vincent Harding (a close confidant of King), has written about King’s last year of life, when he turned towards the anti-war and anti-poverty movements, and by so doing, earned the enmity of the rich and powerful. None other than the Washington Post condemned King when he criticized the Vietnam War. In an editorial, they wrote, “He has diminished his usefulness to his cause, to his country and to his people.”

Dr. Harding wrote that King read a challenging article in Ramparts magazine called “The Children of Vietnam.” Harding writes: “He told his staff that ‘After reading that article, I said to myself, “Never again will I be silent on an issue that is destroying the soul of our nation and destroying thousands and thousands of little children in Vietnam.”’ For all who would hear his voice, he was saying, ‘I can no longer be cautious about this matter. I feel so deeply in my heart that we are so wrong in this country and the time has come for a real prophecy, and I’m willing to go that road.’” [Harding, V., “Martin Luther King: The Inconvenient Hero” (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1996), pp.100-01.]

Deserted by fair-weather friends, lambasted by the “liberal” [white] press, bereft of donations that fueled the movement, the sensitive preacher was hurt, but he did not give up. As Harding wrote, he continued to resist what we now call imperialism: “Who knew that night, April 4, that he had precisely one more year to live, that the bullet was closing in? For King saw the larger context. He had already declared in other places that his ‘beloved country’ was engaged in a war that sought to turn the clock of history back and perpetuate white colonialism.” Underlying this bitterness, he said, was America’s refusal to recognize that “the evils of capitalism are as real as the evils of militarism and evils of racism.” [p.101]

Forty years ago, King was assassinated for standing against white supremacy and the U.S. government’s thirst for violence and conquest in Vietnam.

Today, the corporate media does the job that the military and the spy agencies once did—for the same masters. Yesterday, it was Martin L. King. Today, it’s the Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright. □

3rd circuit rejects new trial for Mumia, & presents only 2 options: Execution or life in prison without parole

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WE SAY FREE MUMIA NOW!



Sat • April 19 11 a.m. (10 a.m. for Philly activists)

Federal Building, 6th St. & Market



There is considerable documentation of the extremely “irregular” decision making by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. See Linn Washington’s piece at Millions4Mumia.org and the minority position in the Third Circuit ruling. We must expose the conspiracy to convict Mumia, to deny him a new trial, and to have him either executed or imprisoned for life. **We will not accept their decision. Into the streets for our brother, Mumia, and for ourselves!!!**



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If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

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Black Workers For Justice hold annual banquet

By Monica Moorehead

The 25th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Support for Labor banquet, sponsored by Black Workers For Justice, took place on April 5 at the North Carolina Association of Educators building in Raleigh, N.C. The theme of this year's program was "We Charge Genocide! Stand Up, Organize & Resist!"

The impetus for the theme comes from a movement that began in 1951, when African-American activists William Patterson, Paul Robeson and others collaborated on a document called "We Charge Genocide, The Historic Petition to the United Nations for Relief from a Crime of the United States Government Against the Negro People." It chronicled the countless lynchings of Black people that had gone unpunished since the end of the Civil War.

This historic document could easily be applied today, with continuing racist repression of Black people embodied by the public housing crisis for Katrina survivors, the Jena Six, police brutality, incarceration and much more.

The banquet came one day after the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King, who became an important voice

against the Vietnam War and was also pro-civil rights and workers' rights.

BWFJ, since its inception 27 years ago, has been carrying on Dr. King's legacy. Many of its members are involved in the Electrical Workers union Local 150's drives to organize public sector workers in North Carolina, which still practices anti-union, right-to-work laws.

The keynote speaker at this year's banquet was Cindy Wiesner, an organizer of the Global Grassroots Justice Alliance and an outreach organizer for the U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta last June. Robert Whiteside, one of the Freightliner 5, gave a short update on their struggle for justice. The 5 are members of United Auto Workers Local 3520 who were terminated from their jobs for opposing a two-tier wage structure during contract negotiations with Freightliner LLC on April 3, 2007. (Read Dante Strobino's article at www.workers.org and also go to www.justice4five.com.)

The Abner Berry Self-Determination Awards were given to longtime labor organizer Dorothy Edwards and youth/community organizer Angaza Mayo-Laughinghouse. Fruit of Labor Singing Ensemble and spoken-word artist Neva Deva provided cultural entertainment. □



WW PHOTOS: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Fruit of Labor singers, above.

Dante Strobino from FIST, left, listens to John Whiteside, one of the Freightliner 5.

King's fight back legacy honored in Detroit



Larry Hales, Debbie Johnson, Andrea Egypt, Sandra Hines, Kevin Carey, Judith Thompson, Abayomi Azikiwe.

WW PHOTOS: CHERYL LABASH

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History was the site of a special commemoration April 5 marking the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"The Struggle Legacy of MLK" was the theme of the gathering sponsored by the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice. More than 150 people came to hear presentations on various aspects of King's life and work.

The program, chaired by MECAWI leader Andrea Egypt, opened with a showing of Dr. King's interview by Mike Douglas in 1967, in which King spoke out against the U.S. war in Vietnam.

Debbie Johnson gave an overview of King's anti-imperialist, anti-war legacy. "King clearly viewed the situation evolving in Southeast Asia as revealing a long history of Vietnamese struggle against colonialism," stated Johnson, "and one in which he viewed any U.S. role there as furthering European colonial domination on a long suffering, but clearly determined people to fight any foreign occupation, whether French or American. King said unequivocally, 'There can be no gainsaying of the fact that we have taken a stand against a people seeking self-determination.'"

Keynote speaker was Larry Hales from Denver, a leader of the national Marxist youth organization FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) and an organizer against police brutality. His topic was the question of nonviolence versus the right to armed self-defense of the African-American community.

Hales reminded the audience: "There is a constant state of war going on against African Americans, the working class and

all people, especially people of color. The first Black people brought here in chains were in a very violent mood. They had just seen their villages destroyed, people killed and sent off to slavery, many of them brutalized and killed or dying on the voyage here.

"The idea of a Black nation and the idea of national liberation quickly formed. The weapon the ruling class used to get whites to participate in the subjugation of people of color is the same one they use now—racism and white supremacy.

"Violence was used to free slaves and rebellions started immediately when slaves were brought to this country. The armed and violent struggle predates the non-violent struggle. Dr. King knew that violence is done by the oppressor and that economic violence, economic warfare was directed at the Black community as well, part of the systematic violence against the oppressed community."

Hales captured the crowd's attention with his political analysis and historical examples of the struggle for Black liberation. He laid out a revolutionary approach as the only solution to ridding society of racism and violence: "The system uses violence when it robs us of what we create as workers, the value we create as workers, so they can make huge profits. Martin Luther King gave his 'I've Been to the Mountaintop' speech in Memphis to striking sanitation workers and talked about 'the promised land.' He didn't mean somewhere you go when you die. He had a vision that things don't have to be this way. There is another way. We won't get rid of violence until this violent system of exploitation is gone."

Other speakers at the event were Kevin Carey, who talked about communists who were active in the civil rights struggle, as

well as possible governmental involvement in King's assassination. Sandra Hines motivated the audience with song before talking about Detroit women "who stepped up and did what's needed

to be done" in many struggles. Judith Thompson also spoke on women in the civil rights movement. Abayomi Azikiwe talked about the legacy of King and the ongoing struggle for economic justice. □

Poor Peoples Campaign rally targets budget cuts

By Frank Neisser
Providence, R.I.

A spirited crowd braved the rain and gathered in front of Rhode Island's State House April 4 for the R.I. Poor Peoples Campaign rally against massive planned human services budget cuts.

The rally was called on the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King and invoked the spirit of the Poor Peoples Campaign march on Washington. It comes at a time when Rhode Island is facing a budget deficit of more than \$500 million and is planning a \$67 million cut to Medicare, a \$17 million cut to higher education, and a \$3.3 million cut to Head Start programs.

The rally's demands included "Tax the rich, not the poor!" "Cut off \$ for war abroad!" and "Fund a war on poverty at home!" The rally was chaired by Jasmine Woodbury of DARE youth.

Bob Traynham of USW 8751, the Boston School Bus Union, sang the Black National Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," described the crisis working people face with foreclosures and layoffs, and called for participation in an April 16 march against the Mortgage Bankers Association meeting in Washington, D.C. Traynham is himself being evicted because the building

where he rents has been foreclosed.

As Maggie of the Campaign to End Childhood Poverty described the impact of the budget deficit on children, she broke down and wept. Other speakers included Anea Garcia, DARE youth; Father Raymond Tetrault, St. Teresa's Church; John Prince, Family Life Center; Rochelle Lee, R.I. Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Committee; Karen McAninch, USW United Service and Allied Workers; Wally Sillanpoa, Community Coalition for Peace; John Gallagher, Poor Peoples Campaign; and John Barns, AFSCME Council 94.

Speakers expressed their outrage that R.I. capital police had denied the rally participants' entrance to the State House. They called for participation in an April 19 Philadelphia demonstration protesting the recent denial of a new trial in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal. And they expressed solidarity with the Narragansett nation, which was found guilty in court that same day for having defended their sovereign land against a raid on a smokeshop in July 2003.

Chief Sachem Matthew Thomas expressed that it was outrageous that they should have been convicted on the 40th anniversary of King's assassination. Dr. King, he said, "was murdered for trying to win fairness and equality. Not a day goes by when I don't have to fight for justice." □

May Day press conference:

‘Build Black/Brown unity’

By Monica Moorehead
New York

On April 4, the 40th anniversary of the assassination of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., New York Councilperson Charles Barron hosted an important press conference on the steps of City Hall to promote the necessity for Black and Brown unity, as well as workers rights, in preparation for a May Day march and rally in New York City. May Day, or International Workers Day, will take place at Union Square in Manhattan starting at 12 noon on Thurs., May 1.

Barron, along with community, anti-war and labor activists from the Black and Latin@ movement, paid tribute to the legacy of Dr. King, who was felled by an assassin’s bullet in 1968 in Memphis, where he had come to support a sanitation strike. A number of the speakers made the point that if Dr. King were alive now, he would oppose the war in Iraq, foreclosures, evictions, attacks on immigrants, layoffs, etc.

Speakers included Councilperson Melissa Mark-Viverito; Harlem tenant organizer Nellie Bailey; Larry Holmes, Troops Out Now Coalition; Teresa Gutierrez and Walter Sinche, May 1st Immigrant and Worker Rights Coalition; Brenda Walker, NYC Solidarity Coalition with Katrina and Rita Survivors; and Charles Jenkins, second vice president, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, NYC Chapter, who emceed the press conference.

Part of the press release reads, “We gather to condemn the mass raids, arrests and deportations of immigrant workers. Let us also condemn the shocking yet telling reality that today almost half of the



PHOTO: ROBERTO MERCADO

N.Y. City Councilperson Charles Barron, pointing finger, at April 4th press conference.

more than 2 million people in this country’s prisons are African Americans. When we talk of the media’s demonization of Latino immigrant workers, especially the undocumented, let us also talk about the demonization of Rev. Jeremiah Wright for telling it like it is.” Go to www.May1.info and www.1mayo.info for more information about the May Day rally and march.

E-mail: mmoorehead@workers.org

Racist immigrant roundup launched in Tucson, Ariz.

By Paul Teitelbaum

In 2003, the Department of Homeland Security published a strategic report called “Operation Endgame.” This document outlines a plan for the mass deportation of all undocumented people from the U.S. by the year 2012.

As part of Endgame, in 2005 a policy of “zero tolerance” called Streamline was introduced in the Del Rio, Texas, sector of the Border Patrol, resulting in the prosecution and imprisonment of every immigrant detained in that sector.

In January 2008, Streamline was launched in the Border Patrol’s Tucson sector. Called the Arizona Denial Prosecution Initiative, the Tucson version has the stated goal of criminally prosecuting 100 immigrants per day in an expedited fashion, where the time from initial appearance before a judge to final sentencing is a matter of minutes.

The ADPI criminalizes all immigrants and imposes prison sentences ranging

from 14 days up to 180 days, to be served in private prisons. Currently, Corrections Corporation of America operates six prisons in Arizona, four of which are detention camps used to house the victims of this racist repression.

In mid-March, Homeland Security made plans to move proceedings for the victims of ADPI from the federal courthouse to the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, where the Border Patrol has its headquarters. Holding the proceedings behind military walls would make them completely inaccessible to the public. Pressure from community groups such as Derechos Humanos and the Tucson May 1st Coalition has delayed this “Guantánamo” tactic.

At the end of March, CCA announced that former Arizona Sen. Dennis DeConcini had been named to its board of directors. This appointment is certainly designed to give CCA the edge in competing for the contracts to build more concentration camps in Arizona.

Continued on page 8

STOP THE RAIDS & DEPORTATIONS
Legalization Now • Justice for ALL



MASS RALLY for IMMIGRANT & WORKER RIGHTS

THURSDAY ► MAY 1st

► 12 p.m. Gather at Union Square
14th Street and Broadway
► 4 p.m. Rally & March

May Day 2008 is critically important. Will the optimism and hope expressed around the Presidential elections translate into an end of immigrant raids & deportations? Will it bring an end to the foreclosures of homes, the lowering of gas and food prices, or an end to lay-offs?

Whatever the outcome in November, the May 1st Coalition for Immigrant and Worker Rights will be marching once again on May Day, International Workers Day, to say no to all the attacks against workers here and around the world.

We call on the progressive community, the anti-war movement, the women’s & LGBT movement, and especially on the labor movement, to come out for May Day 2008. March for solidarity, because an injury to one is an injury to all!

Rally called by
May 1st Coalition for Immigrant & Worker Rights
www.may1.info 641.715.3900 Ext. 97869#

WE SAY ▼

- ◆ Black, Latino, Asian, Indigenous, Arab, White-In Unity there is strength.
- ◆ ICE raids are racist, anti-union, and violate immigrant & U.S. workers’ civil rights & divide families.
- ◆ Jobs & homes, not lay-offs & foreclosures. Stop demolition of public housing in New Orleans & everywhere.
- ◆ No war in Iraq, bring the troops home now.
- ◆ Political asylum for Victor Toro; No deportation of Flor Crisóstomo.
- ◆ Money for levees in New Orleans, not for militarizing the U.S./Mexico border.
- ◆ Repeal NAFTA. U.S. trade agreements force migration & lay-offs.

DETROIT

American Axle strikers send message to would-be scabs

Now in the seventh week of the American Axle strike, more than 3,600 workers and their supporters at five plants in Michigan and New York are still holding strong. As of April 6, at least 30 GM plants have shut down due to the bosses’ greed. Donations, provisions and resolutions continue to pour into the locals’ union halls.

On April 5 in Hamtramck, Mich., a crowd of strikers and their labor and community allies marched from the center

of town to the Local 235 and Local 262 union halls. The United Auto Worker International and the locals’ bargaining teams will return to the bargaining table April 9.

Mobilizing is ongoing for an April 18 UAW rally at Hart Plaza in Detroit to support the American Axle workers. For more information: 313-926-5312 or www.uawaam.org.

—Bryan G. Pfeifer

Job loss

Another sign of capitalist decay

By Kathy Durkin

Last month, 300,000 workers lost their jobs. When offset by the number of new jobs, 80,000 jobs were eradicated in March.

Since 2008 began, there has been an overall net job loss of 232,000 (Dept. of Labor report, April 4). Private industry shed nearly 300,000 jobs in that same period. This is the largest number of job losses in five years. The “official” unemployment figure is now 5.1 percent of the workforce, but the real story is much worse than that.

In the last year, nearly one million workers have lost their jobs.

Last week, 407,000 workers filed for unemployment insurance. For many this was the first time.

Although the Department of Labor says joblessness rose to 7.8 million in March, many more people have been affected. The “hidden unemployed” include nearly five million workers who desperately need full-time jobs with benefits, but are working part time “involuntarily” because of cuts in hours or lack of full-time jobs. At least another 4.5 million people want jobs but can’t find work at all. Many have given up looking for work.

An estimated 127,000 new jobs must be added monthly to keep unemployment at 4.8 percent, the rate one year ago. (Economic Policy Institute) But that

still means that more than 7 million are “officially” out of work. This figure may be acceptable to the capitalist bankers, bosses and economists, as unemployment is inherent in the capitalist system, but it’s misery for those workers and their families, and for the many not even counted.

Though the current crisis was set off in the housing and financial markets, it is winding its way through almost every sector of the economy.

Who has lost jobs? Construction workers who build homes, apartment and commercial buildings—often without safety equipment—lost 51,000 jobs last month. Due to capitalist overproduction of homes and buildings—not being sold for profit—sales fell. Then the industry contracted, and the workers paid the price.

The manufacturing sector, including those companies making building materials such as lumber and drywall, felt the impact. Companies lost sales, and then cut 48,000 jobs last month.

Those who work behind store counters or stock shelves lost 13,000 jobs in March. Retail store owners cut back when profitable sales weren’t high enough for them.

Employment services lost 42,000 jobs last month, with half of them temporary workers, as employers cut back on hiring. Jobs were also wiped out in the auto industry, at garment and textile companies, banks, real estate offices, hotels, airlines

and communications and other industries.

Rippling impact of job cuts

All sectors of the working class feel the impact of a declining economy, as all genders of all ages are damaged by the current wave of layoffs. Those in the oppressed communities are the hardest hit.

Although the Department of Labor says that unemployment has reached 9 percent among African-American workers and 6.9 percent among Latin@ workers, the real rates are much higher, especially in the big cities. The percentage of African-American youth who are unemployed is now 19.7 percent, but these figures don’t tell the whole truth.

With more workers unemployed with less or no income, they are purchasing less, which leads to a downward spiral. As companies lose profits—the prime goal of capitalist production—they react by contracting and laying off more workers.

Joshua Shapiro, chief U.S. economist for MFR Inc. in New York, warned, “With the consumer’s only source of support for spending coming from job-related income growth, a rapidly weakening labor market is the worst possible news for the economy.” (Los Angeles Times, April 5)

It’s also getting harder for workers to pay their bills, as real wages are not keeping up with inflation, another bad sign.

More workers won’t be able to pay mort-

gages or rent, so they will lose housing. Many more will join the 47 million people without health insurance. Pensions will be lost. College educations will be unobtainable. As more people have to take part-time or low-wage jobs, more will need food stamps, and more will be impoverished.

Lives are being thrown into insecurity and uncertainty. Yet this devastation is all intrinsic to capitalism.

The latest job loss figures have set off alarm bells nationwide among business owners and bankers, but not because of any concern about workers or their families. They’re afraid of the “R” word—recession—as they fear a further economic downturn and lost profits.

Jared Bernstein, of the Economics Policy Institute, noted, “Three months in a row of payroll job losses and a sizable negative revision: these are clear signs that the job market is in recession.” (The Telegraph, April 5) He also predicts more job losses are coming.

Congress’ meager tax rebates to individuals and humongous tax cuts for big business will not help workers keep their homes. Nor will they create jobs.

Why doesn’t the government declare a moratorium on layoffs to stem the growing crisis for the workers?

This is a demand that all progressive forces should make loud and clear in the streets. □

Why we say A JOB IS A RIGHT

By Greg Butterfield

“Jobless claims highest since Katrina,” declared CNN on April 3. “Food stamp use at record pace as jobs vanish,” noted the March 31 New York Times.

Eighty thousand jobs vanished in March, the biggest drop in five years. Revised Labor Department figures show that the U.S. economy lost 76,000 jobs in both January and February. The unemployment rate jumped from 4.8 percent to 5.1 percent in the span of a month.

A serious recession is underway. Unemployment is pounding at workers’ doors—for those who haven’t already lost their doors (and homes) to the ever-deepening mortgage crisis.

You need a job to keep a roof over your head, feed yourself and your family, and pay the bills. Everyone needs a job or other source of income to survive.

Having a job is a basic necessity. It’s a simple human right.

In fact, the right to a job is a matter of law—and has been for 62 years!

The 1946 Employment Act and the 1978 Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act legally obligate the president and Congress to use all available means to achieve full employment.

Also adopted in 1946, the United Nations Charter on Human Rights declares,

“Everyone has the right to work ... and to protection against unemployment,” as well as the right to housing, education and health care.

The 1978 Full Employment Act provides for convening a National Employment Conference to discuss enforcement.

Yet no administration—Republican or Democrat—has ever attempted to fulfill these obligations.

It’s high time the government was made to enforce these laws.

Gov’t power to ban layoffs and create jobs

Even before George W. Bush’s usurpation of greater executive powers, the president of the U.S. was fully empowered to end unemployment and create jobs in response to an economic crisis.

The 1978 law allows the government to create “a reservoir of public employment” if private corporations are unable to provide enough jobs.

Every governor, mayor and county executive also has full authority to order an end to layoffs in an economic emergency.

New York State, for example, empowers the governor to take any action necessary to prevent or stop the suffering of people as a result of “a natural or man-made disaster.”

The same law requires “a joint effort” of

public and private spheres to mobilize the resources of business, labor, agriculture and government at every level to prepare for and meet disasters of all kinds.

The boom-and-bust system of capitalism, which always seeks the highest rate of profit with the least number of workers, is the ultimate “man-made” disaster.

First comes the struggle, then comes the law

Worker unrest during the depression of the 1930s, following World War II, during the Civil Rights era, and during the recession of the 1970s forced the capitalist government to put these laws on the books.

The legal precedent goes back to 1937. Labor Secretary Frances Perkins stated then that workers had a property right to their jobs when she defended the right of sit-down strikers to occupy factories.

Perkins, appointed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was no revolutionary. She was putting into legal terms what the workers had already achieved by seizing the plants, establishing workers’ control, and putting capitalist property rights into question.

It will take further struggle—a united campaign of mass action—to turn these words on paper into reality. The point is, there already exists a legal framework to do so.

“The right to a job is a property right,” explained Sam Marcy, founding chairperson of Workers World Party, in his 1986 book, “High Tech, Low Pay.” “The right to seize and occupy the plants [which includes stores, hospitals, schools, etc.] is an accompanying right. Doing it will make it lawful if carried out in earnest and on a mass scale.”

What if labor unions, together with immigrant workers’ organizations, community groups, the anti-war, women’s and lesbian/gay/bi/trans movements, made these demands of the incoming president:

- Issue an executive order halting layoffs and forcing the Fortune 500 companies to rehire;
- Call a special joint session of Congress to deal exclusively with creating a jobs program that will put 10 million people to work right away with union wages and benefits, with special attention to rebuilding poor and working-class areas of New Orleans and the Gulf region;
- End the raids against undocumented workers, ban foreclosures and evictions, make quality health care available to everyone, and pass a big increase in the minimum wage.

What if they called upon the unemployed and underemployed to come and occupy Washington until the new president and Congress met their demands? □

Meeting supports teachers in Puerto Rico

An April 4 meeting held at Hunter College to support the FMPR (Federación de Maestros de Puerto Rico), the teachers union in Puerto Rico that went out on strike from Feb. 21 to March 5, drew more than 100 people.

There was strong participation from New York’s United Federation of Teachers, which represents teachers of kindergarten through 12th grade; and

from the Professional Staff Congress, the union that represents teachers and staff at the City University of New York. Outside the union movement, many members of the Latin@ community in New York also came out to show their solidarity.

Norma Pérez, a member of the UFT, spoke on how the FMPR Solidarity Committee in New York was formed and the role it played in the strike. Tania

Hernández spoke on how she and other women teachers—a majority of the strikers—militantly confronted the cops. Some short videos on the picket lines and how they resisted the cops’ attacks were shown.

The meeting was primarily conducted in Spanish, with some translation for monolingual English speakers.

—Report and photos by G. Dunkel



Norma Pérez and FMPR President Rafael Feliciano.



NEW YORK

Digging below the surface of this crisis

By Deirdre Griswold

Have you lost your job?
Are you in danger of getting kicked out of your house or rental unit because of the mortgage crisis?
Do you work full time but keep falling behind on your bills?
Do you find it impossible to balance health care needs with the cost of everything else—from food, transportation and education to just trying to get a little enjoyment out of life?
Don't beat yourself up. It's not because you did something wrong.
You have plenty of company. Many tens of millions in this country are really suffering. Your problems are not personal. Even if you did everything "right"—struggled to get an education and job skills, struggled to find full-time work, struggled to be pleasant and agreeable on your job even when you were justifiably angry over conditions—you could still be in the same boat.
Just keep this in mind. You're living in a particular kind of economic system. It's called capitalism. It creates enormous instability and inequality—the rich get richer, the workers get poorer.
It's now at the point where the rich are so disgustingly rich, and the workers so poor, that a downward spiral has started. The capitalists are always competing with each other to raise their profits. They close plants or move them to where wages are even lower. That leaves even poorer workers, and less people able to buy what's produced. Which causes more companies to fold. And so on in a vicious circle.
Maybe you remember the days when it all seemed to be working. More goods produced, more jobs created. But the bosses were getting a thousand dollars for every one of ours. And they spent a lot of it on new technology, to get an edge over

their competitors. They were producing more but laying off workers at the same time and driving down wages. People were buying on credit, hoping to earn enough in the future to stay on top of their debts.
Now it's all coming due—credit cards, student loans, home mortgages—at the same time that workers are losing their jobs. And for those lucky enough to be working, wages are lower today, in real dollars, than 30 years ago. Plus it's much harder to find a full-time job. And benefits? Most new workers never see them.
But don't despair. Things are going to get even tougher, but capitalism won't be eternal. It will be replaced by something much, much better.
Think how different your life would be if, from the time you were a kid, you knew you could get an education free—up to any level you desired.
If you knew that at any point in your adult life, you could get a job that paid a decent wage—enough for you to live independently and raise a family, if you wished.
If you knew that you'd never have to worry about how to pay for medical care if you or a family member got sick.
If you knew that when you reached retirement age, you would automatically get a decent pension to live out your life in dignity and comfort.
The right to a job or income for life. The right to free health care. The right to free education. The right to decent, affordable housing.
Impossible? Think again. All this is just common sense—once we get rid of the profit motive.
With all the wealth created by workers in this country, we could have all this and a lot more. In fact, we could cut the work-week, too, and take longer vacations, so people would have time to live instead of work until they drop.

Instead, capitalism directs most of the wealth workers create into the hands of those already enormously wealthy, who often have more than they know what to do with.
The capitalist drive for profits is also what's behind the endless wars and trillions of dollars spent on stationing troops all over the globe.
A different economic system
What workers everywhere need is SOCIALISM.
Why? Because it's the only system that takes the wealth of society—the wealth created by workers—out of private hands. We're not talking about taking away workers' personal property. It's not socialists but capitalists who are taking away workers' homes, cars and furniture and garnisheeing their wages. We're talking about taking the billions stolen from workers' labor away from the whole capitalist class and using it for people's needs.
No more Enrons or Halliburtons running the economy, no more billionaires controlling the government!
When the working class, the vast majority of the people, dissolve the corporations and banks that run everything now and set up a new government under their control to make the decisions about how society's wealth should be used, we will have true democracy. There's no democracy when private wealth buys political power. Elections under capitalism are only a cover for plutocracy—the rule of the wealthy.
Socialist governments set up by organized, militant workers can—and have—put into place the kinds of universal guarantees mentioned above: jobs, health care, education and housing for all. The human needs that capitalism can't solve become the first priorities of a socialist revolution.
Is getting socialism easy? Hell, no! The bosses wage a constant war against the

workers. These super-rich parasites make it extremely hard for workers just to organize unions, let alone challenge the political power of the ruling class.
But fighting for socialism is a whole lot better than the alternative: letting the capitalists run the working class and our whole planet into the ground with depressions, wars and unbridled environmental destruction. Fighting for socialism is fighting for the future of the human race.
Right now, there's a lot we can and must do to fight the bosses and the capitalist state on every level.
We need to resist the foreclosures and the seizure of workers' personal property. We need to demand the right to our jobs and stop the layoffs. We need to combat racism, sexism, homophobia and persecution of immigrants. All this is absolutely necessary to build the working-class unity needed to push back the bosses.
We need to organize more unions, more youth and community groups and make them fight in our interests. We need to resist imperialist wars and bring the troops home.
But as long as we're split into separate groups fighting alone for this and for that, we can't make big gains. The struggle for socialism brings all these issues together.
When you're a socialist, you're for the rights of all the workers and oppressed, not just yourself. You're for solidarity with the working people of all nations. You're for equality, sharing and conservation of the earth's resources, instead of a constant bloody struggle over control of these resources by competing capitalist groups. You're for helping raise the standard of living everywhere, not lowering wages here to those of the poorest countries.
The stronger the socialist movement, the stronger will be all these people's struggles.
E-mail: dgriswold@workers.org

What lurks behind Bear Stearns bailout?

By Milt Neidenberg

***The banks are made of marble
With a guard at every door
And the vaults are stuffed with silver
That the workers sweated for***
—Folk song by Les Rice

The week of March 10, the fourth-largest U.S. investment bank, Bear Stearns, collapsed. Panic-stricken investors, shareholders, employees and other creditors simultaneously demanded their money in a run on the bank, which had become the second-largest trader in speculative financial instruments.
Fear of a capitalist meltdown spread through the financial markets. Giant commercial banks CitiGroup, Bank of America and Wachovia, plus investment banks Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch and a host of others, were also swept up in a tsunami of risky investments. All were flooded with subprime mortgages, faulty structured investment vehicles, opaque credit default swaps and other over-valued financial instruments. They were forced to write down hundreds of billions in losses.
Britain's Northern Rock went belly up, forcing the government to pick up the pieces. Swiss bank UBS, Germany's Deutsche Bank and other European banks were also caught up in the whirlpool of risky financial instruments.
Was this the beginning of a 1929 meltdown? Or would bailing out the banks avoid a crash?

On the weekend of March 14-16, the leaders of the Federal Reserve Board and the government met in all-night sessions, panicked and fearful of a financial meltdown. Most important, JPMorgan Chase, one of the most powerful banking conglomerates in the world, was invited to join the conclave. It became the key player, dominating the negotiations and demanding big-time collateral and guarantees to buy out Bear Stearns and alleviate the fears of Wall Street.
Federal Reserve Board chair Ben Bernanke and President Timothy Geithner of the New York Federal Reserve, architects of the Bear Stearns bailout, were soon called before the Senate Finance Committee. They "compared the turmoil that weekend to the Panic of 1907 and the Great Depression-era run on banks." (Bloomberg.com, April 4)
JPMorgan Chase is an amalgam of the infamous banking houses of Morgan and Rockefeller, widely heralded as the robber barons of yesteryear. They built empires of high finance off the blood, sweat and tears of mainly immigrant labor.
J. P. Morgan began his career by selling defective rifles to the government during the Civil War. He parlayed those profits into railroads built on stolen public land, and proceeded to build giant steel mills on the bones of small entrepreneurs.
John D. Rockefeller made his start in big oil by blowing up small rival oil operations, then expanding into mining and real estate. JP and JD came to dominate other monopolistic industries like auto

and finance.
Both empires provoked wars abroad to consolidate their wealth, ruthlessly fought unions and brutalized workers, and created company towns and stores that kept workers in a constant state of debt and poverty.
Fed blesses Morgan buyout
In January, Bear Stearns stock had traded at \$171 a share. By March, Jamie Dimon, head of JPMorgan Chase, saw a chance to steal this 85-year-old Wall Street dynasty at \$2 a share. Although the price was later raised to \$10, Bear Stearns shareholders and employees were totally wiped out.
For a pittance, JPMorgan acquired \$1.2 billion in prime midtown property along with Bear Stearns' premier assets. It arrogantly refused to take over most of the risky financial instruments, forcing the Fed, and eventually the worker/taxpayer, to assume that liability. The Fed blessed JPMorgan with a \$29 billion credit line.
The swindle was worked out in secret meetings among powerful Wall Street players and led by the Fed, regulator of more than a thousand banks associated with the system. The government was represented by the Treasury Department, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Comptroller of the Currency and other governmental agencies. These are the movers and shakers that influence the stock market.
Following this financial coup, the Dow

Jones average of industrial stocks climbed nearly 400 points. For the next few days the market elites were claiming the capitalist crisis was over.
Although the stock market is an integrated sector of the financial services industry, it is also the most prominent representative of capitalist production. All industry, agriculture, commerce and the means of production pass through the hands of stock exchange operators.
Workers bear the burden
When Fed chair Bernanke, savior of banking institutions, finally used the "R" word—for recession, no news to broad sectors of the working class—it was a confirmation that the financial crisis had drawn in the broader capitalist economy. In March 80,000 jobs were officially lost and the unemployment rate rose to 5.1 percent. However, these figures understate the extent of the assault on the workers and oppressed, who have lost more than 10 million jobs since the "jobless recovery" of 2001.
Increasingly, the workers and oppressed are faced with hard choices. Pay for gas to get to work? Stint on groceries? Pay the mortgage or the rent? Or buy the prescriptions? They have seen pensions disappear and wages sunk by hyperinflation—an enormous leap in the cost of staying alive. And the economy continues to stagnate.
One factor in rising inflation is the flood of money printed by the government, which is sinking the dollar. Others are the
Continued on page 7

WW interviews victim of home foreclosure & eviction

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

Every disaster has its victims. When tornados, floods and other natural catastrophes occur, the media is filled with images of devastated neighborhoods and grief-stricken people who have lost everything, whose homes and belongings are gone and lives changed forever.

But absent in the portrayal of the foreclosure and eviction crisis caused by the bankers is the human toll of being forced out of one's home. The media show no pictures of evictions, of belongings accumulated over a lifetime being thrown to the curb like so much trash, of people with nowhere to go whose lives have been turned upside down.

The home foreclosure epidemic raging across the U.S. is staggering in magnitude. In Detroit, a primarily African-American city suffering from plant shutdowns, joblessness and poverty, the statistics are overwhelming.

In 2007, Detroit's Wayne County had the highest number of new foreclosure filings in the U.S.—almost 73,000 homes, a 68 percent increase from a year earlier. The foreclosure rate in Detroit is 10 percent, with some neighborhoods as high as 17 percent. In Michigan as a whole, lenders filed 136,205 new foreclosures last year, representing almost 2 percent of all homes in the state.

But numbers, rates and statistics alone do not begin to tell the story of the human tragedy involved.

Sandra Hines is 54 years old, a life-long Detroit resident and social worker who is currently unemployed. She is active in the Coalition to Stop Police Brutality and ran for the Detroit Board of Education last year on a grassroots platform advocating for students. Hines graciously told Workers World her painful story of being foreclosed and evicted from the home her family owned for 37 years.

WW: Tell us about the home you and your sister lost to foreclosure.

Hines: At the time my parents moved into that northwest Detroit neighborhood, it was when poor people had begun to gather up money to migrate to the better areas in the city. It was 1970 and white people were leaving the city and Black people moving into neighborhoods that had once been influential neighborhoods where white folks lived. It was like growing up together, the families that eventually migrated into those communities.

The house had already been paid for when our mother passed three years ago. My sister and her daughter and son were living with my mother at the time.

My sister, a worker at the General Motors Cadillac plant, was on disability from GM, but continued to try to maintain the taxes and repairs. But GM reduced her disability check in half. That's when she refinanced, because her income was cut and we needed money for family needs and home repairs. That was the whole purpose of getting the house refinanced.

But she got caught up in one of those lending situations with an adjustable rate mortgage and wasn't fully aware of what was going on in terms of having to pay that money back. When it comes down to how these loan contracts are written, and you don't know there's a clause in it—do you know how many pages some of these are? They're inches thick and the lender just says, "Sign here."

Some of the repairs were made, a new furnace put in, electrical work was done, but then things started getting away from us. We couldn't continue to maintain. We came together as a family and tried to get a lawyer to sue these refinance people, but it was too late.

My sister received a letter from the finance company saying we had 56 days and needed to vacate the premises. The 56 days passed with no word. No eviction notice was sent to us or any of that. Finally the eviction notice did show up in November last year. They didn't evict us until the week before Christmas.



WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

Sandra Hines

WW: What happened that day?

Hines: The bailiff and his team showed up. We weren't at home, and they broke into the house. The neighbors called my sister and told her they had brought a dumpster and were taking furniture out. The neighbor said they took the stove and pulled it down the stairs by the cord. They took the refrigerator out and just threw it over the dumpster.

My mother had a lot of antique furniture. They just scarred and scratched up my mother's wooden furniture, an antique bedroom set that was passed down from another generation. They tore the furniture up. And it was the coldest day of last year, the first snow that we had. That was the day they did it.

WW: How did you feel as this was taking place?

Hines: It's hard to describe. It was kind of a surreal state. I was numb. It's almost like a death. You feel helpless. You're embarrassed, humiliated, angry, disgusted, all of those kinds of feelings. And then there's the neighborhood, the disconnect with all those people you've been accustomed to over the years. We lost a lot of stuff, lost the community that we knew. It causes depression, stress and physical ailments, not to mention a lot of shame. You feel bad for people to know you've been evicted.

It's all my mother ever talked about, that the house would be paid for and we would have a house to live in when she died. My mother worked hard. She made sacrifices to keep that house. And then to lose the house like that.

WW: What did you do then?

Hines: We ended up moving into a home that one of our relatives owned. Otherwise, we would have been homeless. We were fortunate that we had some relatives who had real estate.

I think about that. I can't imagine—I think about single mothers with young

children, whole families with nowhere to go.

A lot of people have ended up homeless because of this experience. Where are they? Every neighborhood is ravaged by 10 or 15 abandoned homes. There's not a neighborhood you go to in the city of Detroit where there's not "for sale" signs all up and down the street. Where are those people?

WW: What do you have to tell people who are facing foreclosure or who are worried about being laid off and losing their homes?

Hines: People are going to have to mobilize and organize around the foreclosure issue and demand that the state and the federal government do what's necessary to fix the problem. It doesn't appear that anything is really in place now to truly help people. The only thing I can see as a solution is a moratorium, that people band together as one major force to call for a moratorium. That's the only alternative.

WW: How can we press the government to enact a moratorium?

Hines: It's going to have to be more real people involved who have actually experienced what we have experienced. I think you're really going to have to bring those people together so the government will really see the magnitude. We're talking about it, but we're not seeing pictures of people who've been evicted. We haven't seen any pictures of where people have ended up, whether it be in shelters or out on the streets.

We need to document and see people actually being put out of their homes. People need to tell the stories of how they've been tricked out of their home by these predatory lending companies. There needs to be a face put on it—real people and the behind-the-scenes effects of what's happened to them and how people have been ravaged. □

Bearn Stearns bailout

Continued from page 6

stoking of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan and the growing fear over the unprecedented debt and the credit crunch. "The Federal Reserve and other global central banks have been hosing the world with new money in their efforts to avoid a financial crisis.... The cheap money didn't stop a Wall Street bank run—it was the Fed's bold plan to absorb subprime debt that did that—but it may add fuel to the inflation fire," warned the Washington Post on April 3.

Multibillionaire Victor Soros, a prominent Wall Street global investor, says a super-bubble is growing in the commodities markets. ("Wall Street Journal," NBC-TV, April 6) Rising prices in metals, food, energy, services and a host of other staples are fueling hyperinflation, while the subprime housing crisis has yet to reach bottom. Is Soros talking about another 1929 crash?

A debate is going on within the ruling class—is the economy in a short-lived cyclical recession or will there be a capitalist economic crash?

The extreme volatility and sharp ups and downs in the stock market reflect the debate.

A similar discussion took place in the latter part of the golden 1920s. The argument was settled by the devastating 1929 stock market crash, which led to the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Missing from the debate are the fundamental and material interests of the masses. There is an absolute necessity for an independent, class-wide, massive wave of demands, programs and strategies emanating from the needs of workers, the oppressed and their organizations. Radicalization of the multinational working class is inevitable. A struggle against the banks, the financial institutions, corporate monopolies and their stooges in government will be a good beginning. □

www.StopForeclosuresandEvictions.org
Demonstrate Against the Mortgage Banker\$A\$\$. Annual Policy Conference

Wed. **April 16 3 pm** WASHINGTON COURT HOTEL 525 New Jersey Ave. NW (Between E & F St., near Union Station) Bus to Wash., D.C. from NYC leaving at 8 a.m. from 55 W. 17th St. **212.633.6646**

An open letter to the anti-war movement



As a result of an important action taken at the recent International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU) Caucus, longshore workers will stop work during the first shift in opposition to the war in Iraq on May 1, 2008. They will also use this occasion to acknowledge International Workers Day to express labor solidarity concerning issues and challenges that confront workers.

This war has cost more than 4,000 American lives and 29,000 have been seriously injured. It has been estimated that 1 million Iraqis have lost their lives, untold have been injured and 4 million have been displaced in this illegal and immoral war and occupation. The war is costing \$435 million per day. So far, \$526 billion has been expended on the war. The daily amount spent on the war could enroll 58,000 youngsters in Head Start or

provide health insurance to 329,200 low-income children.

We're writing to ask you to contact ILWU President Robert McEllrath with a letter of support for the Longshore Caucus' resolution to use International Workers Day to "stop work to stop the war." Please ask other organizations to do the same.

Robert McEllrath, ILWU President
1188 Franklin Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 775-0533
(415) 775-1302 FAX

Your support in spreading the word of this historic action is very important.

In Solidarity,
**Clarence Thomas, National Co-Chair
Million Worker March Movement**
920 - 54th Street, Oakland, CA 94608
Phone: 510-333-4301; Fax: 510-215-2800



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Clarence Thomas, wearing cap, at San Francisco anti-war protest March 18, 2006.

COAST TO COAST

Labor supports IWLU anti-war May Day work stoppage

The following anti-war resolution was adopted unanimously at the March 27 delegate assembly of the Professional Staff Congress, AFT Local 2334 at the City University of New York.

Whereas, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union has voted to stop work and shut down all 29 West Coast ports for the full 8-hour day shift on May 1st, in protest against the war in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

Whereas, this historic decision to use the power of their contract to close the ports represents one of the most powerful forms of labor action a union can take to demand an end to the war; and

Whereas, the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY has, since the start of the war in Iraq, called for an end to the war and a reordering of national priorities so that funding is available for education, health-care, jobs and other human needs; and

Whereas, it is especially important that CUNY students, faculty and staff have an opportunity to discuss the meaning of a powerful labor action to end the war, given the intense military recruitment our students face and the direct effect of the war budget on CUNY funding and contracts; and

Whereas, the PSC has embarked on the most intense phase of our fight for a fair contract; and

Whereas, the ILWU has expressed the hope that its decision will be a "clarion call" to the rest of labor; and

Whereas, the March meeting of the Hunter PSC chapter voted to hold an outdoor event/teach-in against the war in Iraq and Afghanistan on May 1st in solidarity with the ILWU work stoppage and with the theme of mobilizing labor's power against the war; therefore be it

RESOLVED that the PSC send to the ILWU a message of solidarity on the occasion of their historic initiative for workers' action against the war, and as part of this effort, be it further

RESOLVED that while the priority for PSC organizing during the next two months will be the drive to reach a good contract settlement, PSC chapters that vote to undertake a campus event or teach-in on May 1 in solidarity with the ILWU action will be supported in doing so; and such actions should reach out as broadly as possible to students and the commu-

nity and should contribute to building the union campaign for a good contract.

This resolution was adopted on March 24 by a unanimous vote by the San Francisco Labor Council.

Whereas, the San Francisco Labor Council has a longstanding position calling for an immediate end to the U.S. war and occupation in Iraq; therefore be it

Resolved, that the San Francisco Labor Council supports the decision of the Longshore Caucus of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU) to stop work for 8 hours on Thursday, May 1, 2008—International Workers Day—at all West Coast ports, to demand "an immediate end to the war and occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Middle East."

The Council supports the decision of Branch 214 of the National Association of Letter Carriers to observe 2 minutes of silence in all carrier stations at 8:15 a.m. on May 1st, in solidarity with the ILWU action and to express their opposition to the war in Iraq; and be it further

Resolved, that the San Francisco Labor Council encourages other unions to follow ILWU's call for a "No Peace-No Work Holiday" of other labor actions on May Day, to express their opposition to the U.S. wars and occupations in the Middle East; and be it finally

Resolved, that the San Francisco Labor Council send a letter of congratulations to ILWU President Bob McEllrath for his union's bold initiative to use the occasion of International Workers Day to stop work to stop the war. □

Angola 3 lawyer demands their freedom

Nick Trenticosta, lawyer for Herman Wallace and Albert Woodfox, two of the "Angola Three," issued the following March 27 statement in response to Louisiana State Penitentiary's decision to move his clients from solitary confinement to a separate dormitory:

Herman and Albert need to be released from prison because they are innocent: they were framed for a murder they did not commit.

After thirty-six years of solitary confinement, recent media scrutiny, a press

School closing evokes: EDUCATION IS A RIGHT!

By Paul Teitelbaum
Tucson, Ariz.

A packed auditorium confronted the Tucson Unified School District Governing Board March 27 at an evening public hearing regarding the board's decision to close the Wrightstown Elementary School.

An endless stream of parents, teachers, students and community members spent two hours expressing their outrage with the board for even considering closing a public school.

In addition to the Wrightstown school, TUSD plans to close three other elementary schools as well as to laying off 282 teachers. The board claims there is a budget "shortfall" that cannot be remedied and they have no choice but to "close schools and reduce staff" in order to stay within their budget.

After the public hearing members of the International Action Center of Tucson and the Tucson May 1st Coalition leaflet-

ed parents, teachers and students as they left the school.

Every available copy of the IAC Tucson/May 1st Coalition "Education is a Right!" leaflet was enthusiastically taken by people as they left. Many people stopped to engage in spirited conversations with IAC and May 1st activists.

The leaflet highlighted the fact that "education is a right" and disputed the statement that there is "no money" by pointing to the trillions of dollars the government has available to fund endless war and the recent injection of \$400 billion to bail out the big banks responsible for the subprime mortgage crisis.

The leaflet also invited everyone to participate in this year's May Day march and unite with other working and oppressed people suffering under the current economic crisis. The Tucson May 1st Coalition has made "Money for Education, Healthcare, Housing and Jobs for All!" one of its demands. □

Racist immigrant roundup launched in Tucson, Ariz.

Continued from page 4

Coinciding with the appointment of DeConcini, the University of Arizona announced that it will receive \$15 million in federal money to lead a research center for Border Security and Immigration. The university will be working with Boeing, Raytheon, Motorola, Science Applications



conference by Louisiana House Judiciary Committee Chairman Cedric Richmond, and a visit by U.S. House Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers have caused the Angola prison authorities to panic and move the two men into new quarters without informing them or their lawyers about the terms of their new situation at the prison.

We will redouble our efforts to gain justice and therefore freedom for Wallace and Woodfox. Changing their cells is not enough. □

International Corporation and other corporations to develop high-tech gadgetry for use by the Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. This \$15 million grant is in addition to the \$33 million in grants that DHS dispensed to Arizona in fiscal year 2007.

While money is being squandered on this racist attack against workers who were forced to leave their homes in Mexico and Central America in order to survive, local school districts are citing budget shortfalls and planning to close schools and lay off teachers (see article above). The governor has also declared a moratorium on the hiring of new state employees.

May Day 2008

The Tucson May 1st Coalition is planning this year's May Day march and rally and demands that the ADPI program be halted and that all workers resist the racist scapegoating of immigrants. We encourage everyone in the region to attend this year's May Day rally and oppose the collusion between the state and the prison-for-profit corporations and demand that the millions of dollars in DHS "grants" be used to fund housing, schools, health care and jobs. □

Rising opposition in Europe

U.S. plans for NATO run into a wall

By Sara Flounders

NATO held a three-day meeting in Bucharest, Romania, on April 2 to 4, attended by George W. Bush and other heads of state. It was a stormy affair. This alliance of imperialist military powers, long dominated by the U.S., was divided on several proposals being pushed by Washington.

One was the proposed further expansion of NATO eastward to include Ukraine and Georgia, which were once part of the Soviet Union and sit on the border of Russia. Another was the plan to place a U.S. ballistic missile system in the Czech Republic and Poland, the heart of Europe. Another was Washington's recognition of independence for the Serbian province of Kosovo.

The most immediate problem for Bush, however, was resistance to his call for NATO to send thousands more troops to Afghanistan. The problem of finding more youth to be cannon fodder exposed the obvious weakness of this rapidly expanding military alliance.

The U.S. is so bogged down and overstretched in Iraq that it is twisting the arms of other NATO members to fill the gap as the Pentagon's situation in Afghanistan deteriorates. However, there is mass opposition in Europe to increased military spending and especially to bailing out the U.S. in Iraq or Afghanistan by sending troops.

In poll after poll in both Eastern and Western Europe, the overwhelming majority of the people have opposed deeper military involvement. Politicians know that agreeing to send troops to either Iraq or Afghanistan is political suicide.

U.S. imperialism has grand and ominous plans to surround Russia and China with U.S./NATO bases. The plans look great on paper and in war games. But putting troops on the ground is becoming more and more difficult.

Demonstrations against this NATO summit and other NATO meetings and exercises show the deep opposition fermenting among the masses.

In addition, Russia has warned that the eastward expansion of NATO and the stationing of U.S. missiles in the Czech Republic and Poland pose a grave threat to its security and could lead to European-wide instability and even war.

Both the strong Russian opposition and growing resistance at home have led to disagreements and contention among the European imperialists. At the Bucharest meeting, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg strongly and openly opposed Bush's demands to include Ukraine and Georgia in NATO.

The ruling classes of these countries are imperialist plunderers in their own right. But they are fearful that these aggressive U.S. military advances may be arousing mass opposition from below. Their continued profits are based on capitalist stability.

The weak and dependent capitalist regimes of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, recently added to NATO, voted with the U.S.

U.S. ruling class for expanding NATO

Bush declared in Bucharest that "NATO is no longer a static alliance focused on defending Europe. ... It is now an expeditionary alliance that is sending its forces across the world. ..." (New York Times, April 5) The U.S. president was not just

speaking for his increasingly narrow circle. He carried with him a resolution passed unanimously by the House supporting his demand that Georgia and Ukraine be accepted into NATO.

In Congress and among the presidential candidates and other leading political figures of both capitalist parties, there was no debate or opposition to these dangerous proposals on the future direction of NATO.

Barely reported in the U.S. corporate media was how Bush's demands became a source of contention at the usually sedate and scripted NATO dinner. The political discussion at this state affair lasted two hours past its scheduled time. Finally Laura Bush and the spouses of other political leaders withdrew from the gathering as the sharp exchanges continued.

While the U.S. media was focusing on the Dalai Lama and China's actions in Tibet, there was no coverage of the total lockdown of the entire population of Bucharest by 30,000 police and the outlawing of any political gatherings or protests there.

The unanimity of the U.S. ruling class on NATO's expansion is reflected even in the U.S. progressive political movement. While there is overwhelming opposition to the U.S. occupation of Iraq, there is little discussion of the long-term cost and dangers of NATO expansion.

Washington's hopes had been high before the NATO summit. On the eve of the gathering, Gen. Ray Henault, chairman of the NATO Military Committee, made the following bragging points: "Less than 20 years ago, NATO consisted of 16 members, counted none as partners, and had conducted no operations or exercises outside its member state borders. ... Today, NATO counts 26 members and 38 other countries in four Partnership arrangements. ...

"In a few short years, NATO has conducted eight operations on four continents. NATO has expanded five times since its creation, and further growth looks inevitable. ... It does not seem that the pace of activity will lessen any time soon."

General Henault predicted that the "Bucharest Summit is going to be critical to the future orientation of the Alliance and its Partners, resulting in key political decisions on enlargement, enhancements to our military capabilities, and how we conduct our operations."

But that is not the way the meeting turned out. The differences could barely be papered over at the state dinners or in the final press conference. NATO leaders decided to leave the contentious issue of Ukraine and Georgia to a meeting of their foreign ministers in December 2008. There was no agreement on recognition of Kosovo. Each politician tried to avoid firm or sizable commitments of more troops for Afghanistan.

NATO's rapid growth

NATO as a U.S.-dominated military alliance was, until the collapse of the Soviet Union, a bloc of industrialized, prosperous imperialist countries that had grown wealthy on generations of colonial plunder. It was essentially an imperialist bloc determined to defend capitalist markets against the spread of socialist revolutions

in Europe through military might, nuclear blackmail, economic sabotage, espionage and terror.

Now NATO has grown to four times its original number and spread far beyond its stated North Atlantic area. All the new members and "partners" of this military bloc are countries from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union that have become captured ministates, economic colonies of European and U.S. imperialism. Until 1990 they had far more integrated and planned economies flowing from public ownership of the means of production. Basic necessities from food to housing, health care and education were guaranteed and subsidized by the state.

Membership in this imperialist military alliance is not based on equality or democracy. It is based on a narrow, privileged elite who have benefited enormously from the forced privatization of once publicly owned industries. These elite are anxious to stabilize their new capitalism by tying their countries securely to the markets of the West. Membership in NATO and in the European Union is viewed by this narrow grouping as a security barrier against their own workers.

The process of absorbing these economies has been ruthless. In order to join NATO, the governments have up to 10 years to bring their formerly socialist economies into U.S. and Western capitalist "alignment." NATO calls it the Membership Action Plan (MAP). It is a roadmap telling the regimes what increasingly stiff economic and military conditions they must impose in order to be considered for NATO membership.

Those accepted into the MAP must turn their entire country over to U.S. planners to ensure that changes are made to integrate them into Western capitalist markets. The countries must commit to extensive "cooperation" with the U.S. in political, security and economic fields.

They must develop all military facilities requested of them, contribute forces to participate in NATO military actions, and ensure that their military is under the NATO command structure. Political and economic sovereignty are lost. All long-term planning must be done in coordination with the U.S. But most onerous is that they must vastly increase their defense and police spending and fully integrate their intelligence system with NATO. They must sign for huge new loans and commit to purchases of U.S. military equipment that mesh with NATO.

Enormous promises were made to these countries about the long-term prosperity that awaited their total submission. But now they are the first to feel the brunt of the economic crisis sweeping the capitalist markets.

Demonstrations and mass opposition

Throughout Europe, seething opposition to NATO expansion, U.S. ballistic missile deployment and the sending of NATO forces to Afghanistan is seen in both demonstrations and polls.

In the Czech Republic and Poland, polls show up to 70 percent oppose the missile installations in their countries. Mass rallies, demonstrations and peti-

tion campaigns are demanding the issue be decided by national referendum. The weak U.S.-backed governments in Prague and Warsaw had hoped for NATO's blessing for the missile-basing project.

Three quarters of Russians are against the entry of Ukraine and Georgia into NATO, a study conducted by sociologists of the Levada Center showed. A Harris survey reported on March 28 that Europeans, East and West, oppose the U.S. missile deployment in the Czech Republic and Poland, seeing it as the beginning of more U.S. missiles in Europe. Those polled saw as far-fetched the idea that Iran is a nuclear threat, which Washington gives as a reason for the deployment. Popular understanding across Europe is that Russia would be the target.

In Germany more than 70 percent of people polled came out against the deployment. In Spain the opposition was 61 percent and in France 58 percent. Actual support for the U.S. missiles was very low—11 to 20 percent.

A 2008 German Marshall Fund poll found that only 30 percent of Europeans supported committing troops for combat operations in Afghanistan.

In Ukraine, a survey published in February showed 70 percent opposed their country joining NATO; only 11 percent actually supported NATO membership.

Another poll confirmed that 70 percent of Montenegrins would vote against joining NATO if given a chance to do so.

This popular sentiment is reflected in growing mass movements in the streets.

On the eve of the Bucharest summit, a bloc of socialists and communists in Ukraine called for mass demonstrations. Their leaflet read: "Today average Americans who give a significant part of their family budget for military operations in Iraq do not want to pay for this operation any more and do not want their men to die there. Do Ukrainians want this? NATO—NO!"

A demonstration in Ukraine's capital of Kiev marched on the U.S. Embassy and blocked the city center for hours. Some stayed into the night and erected tents for a longer stay.

Mass demonstrations also took place in the Ukrainian cities of Kharkov, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Luhansk, Odessa, Zaporizhzhya and Sevastopol.

Three days later, when NATO failed to reach a decision on Ukraine and Georgia joining the MAP program, tens of thousands across Ukraine took to the streets celebrating victory.

In Bucharest, where demonstrators were expected from throughout Romania and across Europe to protest the NATO meeting, 30,000 police, military, snipers and secret police occupied the central city.

They made mass arrests at the legally rented anti-NATO convergence center. All protest permits were denied, making anti-NATO demonstrations illegal. Residents were encouraged to leave the city. Schools and workplaces were closed for the duration of the summit. Bucharest's police chief publicly warned that protests would not be tolerated. Activists attempting to enter Romania from other European Union countries were denied entry, with no cause given.

Hundreds rallied in northern Poland on March 29 against U.S. plans to build a missile-defense base in the region. The demonstrators carried banners reading, "We don't want to be your missile shield" and "Not one step more in the arms race."

To be continued. Next: Iraq, Afghanistan and NATO.



Strange Liberators by Gregory Elich

Militarism, Mayhem, & the Pursuit of Profit

'Strange Liberators' begins with Dr. King's April 4, 1967 speech, that called the U.S. invaders of Vietnam 'strange liberators.' The book goes from global sweatshops to Iraq to Korea to Yugoslavia to Zimbabwe before a concluding chapter on global warming.

Order on line from www.Leftbooks.com



Petraeus, remember Tet!

It was just over 40 years ago, early in 1968, that the great Tet Offensive by the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam showed beyond a doubt that U.S. imperialism could not crush the people’s resistance in that poor, agricultural country in Southeast Asia.

South Vietnam at the time was occupied by almost half a million U.S. soldiers. U.S. carpet bombing had been pounding both South and North Vietnam with millions of tons of explosives over five years. The imperialist armed forces tried to break the resistance of the people by employing fiendish weapons like white phosphorous and napalm, which burned everything and everyone they touched. Peasants, workers, students, anyone suspected of being sympathetic to the national liberation forces could be interrogated, tortured and often murdered.

Nevertheless, in 1968 the people rose up all over South Vietnam in well-planned insurrections that came to be known as the Tet Offensive. They penetrated U.S. bases and officers’ clubs and showed the vulnerability of the occupation forces.

Even after that, however, U.S. generals on many occasions testified before Congress that the war could be won if only more money was authorized, if more troops were sent, if more weapons were deployed.

It took another six years before the final withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam. NLF forces rolled into Saigon waving their liberation flag as the last U.S. personnel leaped in panic onto helicopters from the Embassy grounds.

Richard Nixon was president. By that time, the number of dead in Vietnam had risen to several million. The U.S. had also invaded Cambodia and carpet-bombed Laos, causing many more casualties. More than 55,000 U.S. soldiers had died—a fraction of those wounded, mentally or physically.

It is too bad that no one reminded Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, of these historical facts when he testified before Congress this April 8 and 9. Petraeus had come to Washington from his safe havens in the Middle East to call for a halt of at least 45 days in the withdrawal of any U.S. troops from the Iraq war.

Eighteen months ago, U.S. military commanders had told Congress they needed extra money for a “surge”

of troops to Iraq so they could turn around the situation there and win the war. Congress gave them the money. Weary troops were sent back for third and fourth tours of duty. Now Petraeus describes the situation as “fragile” and says that the “gains” made by his forces are “reversible” unless Congress extends the soldiers’ stay there yet again.

Iraq is not Vietnam. The Vietnamese leaders were communists who had been carrying out a struggle for national liberation for generations, and had earlier defeated the French colonial army at Dien Bien Phu.

But Iraq, like Vietnam, is a country the imperialists covet for its raw materials, its exploitable labor force, and its strategic position in Asia. And Iraq, like Vietnam, rose up against the colonial ruler—in this case, Britain—and won control over its most precious resource, oil, back in the 1950s.

In both Iraq and Vietnam, U.S. imperialism has tried to set back the clock to the days before national liberation movements broke up the old colonial world order. It failed in Vietnam. It will fail in Iraq, too.

What the imperialists never seem to be able to understand is the determination of ordinary people to resist foreign domination and exploitation.

As the senators and representatives, including the three presidential candidates, questioned Petraeus, none would think of referring to the Iraq war in this way. The troops are supposedly “defending their country,” although Iraq never attacked the U.S. The issue the politicians raise is whether the surge has been a “success,” not that the war and the surge are both criminal efforts by the super-rich to grab Iraq’s oil.

It was the resistance of the Vietnamese people and the mass opposition of U.S. civilians and soldiers to that war that finally convinced the ruling class to end it.

Today, the Iraqi resistance is doing its part. The U.S. had to admit its “error” in bombing Basra after its savage attack failed to crush the people’s spirit. Petraeus’ testimony just confirmed that the position of the Pentagon and its Iraqi puppets is weaker than ever.

But more is needed—nothing less than ratcheting up a militant anti-war struggle here in the U.S. That is a precondition to end this vicious colonial war in Iraq and bring the troops home. □

WW in 1969:

Stop the war against Black America

Workers World is in its 50th year of publication. Throughout the year, we will share with our readers some of the paper’s content over the past half century. Below is a reprint of an article in 1969, after the U.S. government assassination of Black Panther Party leader Fred Hampton.



Fred Hampton
Black Liberation Fighter
Chairman, Illinois Black Panther Party
MURDERED
by the Nixon-
Mitchell-Daley racist assassins



Dec. 4, 1969

At five o’clock in the morning on Dec. 4, 1969, racist Chicago police, armed to the teeth, smashed their way into the home of Fred Hampton, Chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party, and shot him to death in his bed. They also murdered Mark Clark, a Panther Party member from Peoria, Illinois. The house was surrounded by cops armed with machine guns and tear gas.

This brutal and totally unprovoked act of fascist terror is part of a ruthless campaign by the Nixon Administration and the racist ruling class to exterminate the leadership of the Black Panther Party and to destroy the Party as a force fighting for the liberation of black people.

The broad masses in the anti-war and progressive movement and particularly the white workers must understand that this pre-dawn assassination raid was an atrocity of the same type that the U.S. committed in My Lai. The murder of Panther leader Fred Hampton was a pre-meditated act of barbarism carried out at the orders of the master class in a savage war of aggression against Black America. This provocation cannot, must not, go unchallenged. The time to respond to this monstrous violation of human rights is now. The racists must be punished for their deeds. They must feel the wrath of the people.

The country is presently experiencing a wave of revulsion and horror at the revelation of the My Lai massacre. This bestial act has quite correctly been likened to the Nazi crimes at Lidice and Buchenwald. But it will be demagoguery and a criminal shirking of responsibility to vent anger and indignation at the My Lai massacre without, at the same time, mounting a militant and determined struggle against the atrocities suffered by the Black people right here at home. Home is where the decisive struggle will be fought and won!

Fred Hampton, Mark Clark and the dozens of other members of the Panther Party are only the most recent victims in a long and brutal war against Black America. These murders should be classified as war crimes. They should evoke as much indignation and revulsion among progressive humanity as do the crimes against Vietnam. More importantly, the massacre of Black leaders should be protested just as strenuously, just as militantly and just as widely as the massacre of our Vietnamese brothers.

The war against Black America is total. Any Black community in the U.S. is subject to invasion by U.S. troops, tanks,

armored personnel carriers mounted with machine guns, helicopters, tear gas at the slightest sign of mass resistance to racism and police brutality. Every Black community in the U.S. is already occupied and patrolled by the police of U.S. imperialism. Every Black person in the U.S. is subject to beating, arrest or murder by these occupation forces at any time.

These are the same conditions of enslavement which the Vietnamese are fighting against. Black America, just like Vietnam, is subject to perpetual attack from an imperialist aggressor.

The U.S. billionaires want the Black people to man their sweat shops, work their plantations, sweep their floors and serve their meals for slave wages while the profits roll into their coffers. That is why they are at war against Black America.

The Black people, just like the Vietnamese, have organizations which fight for them. The Black Panther Party is trying to serve the Black people in the same way that the National Liberation Front is trying to serve the Vietnamese people—by fighting for liberation, for self-determination, to get the boot-heel of U.S. imperialism off the peoples’ neck. They fight for the same cause; they are up against the same imperialist enemy and they are both being subjected to the murderous atrocities and war crimes by the ruling class.

The murder of the Panther leaders is part and parcel of the same rampant fascism which led to My Lai, which U.S. big business is unleashing against oppressed people everywhere and which the bosses turn against the working class when they begin to resist exploitation—as they are now beginning to do in GE and dozens of other smaller strikes.

It is the most urgent task of the progressive, student and anti-war movement in general to mobilize a broad and militant counter-attack against these domestic atrocities. It is high time to strike back with full force. We must organize protests, demonstrations and set in motion all forms of struggle against the racist war criminals, Nixon, Mitchell, the fascist courts and all the local agents of the ruling class who persecute Black liberation fighters. We must show the masses that My Lai and the murder of Fred Hampton are two identical deeds executed by the same guiding hand in Washington.

Stop the war against Black America!
Long live the Black liberation struggle!
Long live the solidarity of Black and white against imperialism!
Long live the proletarian revolution! □

Tibet and the CIA’s anti-China Crusade

Has Tibet become the front line of a new national liberation struggle?

Or is something else happening there?

- Why weren’t the Dalai Lama’s slaves freed until 1959?
- Why was one of Hitler’s top Nazis part of the Dalai Lama’s inner circle?
- Why did the CIA create a Tibetan contra force beginning in the 1950s?
- What are the Dalai Lama’s connections to the CIA?
- How are the Tibetan poor affected by the Chinese Revolution?
- What about the ruling class Tibetans who went abroad?

**Updated
with articles
from 2008**

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Anger over hunger in Haiti bursts out

By G. Dunkel

For the past few months poor Haitians have been calling the hunger that they feel every day “Clorox,” because it is so painful that it feels like they have drunk bleach.

After weekly demonstrations in Port-au-Prince and elsewhere against rapidly rising prices of basic necessities and gasoline, the growing anger at these desperate circumstances spilled into the streets.

It began April 3, in Les Cayes, the third largest city in Haiti, about 125 miles south of Port-au-Prince. Five thousand people set up barricades of burning tires and wrecked cars, stopped at least two food trucks carrying rice, distributed the rice to the crowd and attacked a United Nations compound.

Sonia Jeanty, 32, told the Haiti Information Project during a telephone interview from Les Cayes: “We are hungry and have given up on the U.N. and the Préval government to help us. After all the money they have spent here, most of us are eating only one meal a day. It’s unacceptable, especially as we hear the U.N. trying to tell us every day on the radio that things have gotten better. It’s a lie!”

The U.N. and the U.S. have spent around \$2 billion in Haiti in the past four years trying to stabilize the situation after the last coup against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. While the U.N. runs the show in Haiti, it’s the U.S., with the active cooperation of Canada and France, that calls the shots.

More people came out in Les Cayes April

4 and again attacked the U.N. compound. The U.N. soldiers, mostly from Uruguay, fired on protesters who tore down a wall and attacked two U.N. trucks. Four protesters were killed and 20 were injured, according to Sen. Gabriel Fortune, who represents the area in Haiti’s parliament.

Local television network Tele Caramel showed a dead person close to the U.N. base in Les Cayes. Schools, stores and banks remained closed in Les Cayes on both days.

Also on April 4, hundreds of people demonstrated against high prices and hunger in the northwestern port city of Gonaïves. U.N. workers there were evacuated to a police base, although the protests in Gonaïves remained mainly peaceable. Five people in Gonaïves, according to the Haitian Press Agency, were injured by rocks when protesters demanded a school let its students out.

In Petit-Goave, a small city 45 miles south of Port-au-Prince, demonstrators closed schools, but the cops kept them from attacking public buildings. They were, however, able to beat up the mayor.

For the past few months a group called Aba Satan (which is Creole for “Down with Satan”) from Cité Soleil, has been holding demonstrations in front of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry demanding the government lower the price of gasoline and basic foodstuffs. The response of the government has been, “Haiti doesn’t produce petroleum; we can’t subsidize its price.”

Aba Satan told the ministry head, Magguy Durce, that she should lower the



PHOTO: JEAN RISTIL/HAITI LIBERTE

Aba Satan (Down with Satan), a community group from Cité Soleil, a very poor community in Port-au-Prince, held a protest in front of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry April 1 to make the government understand the people need relief from high prices.

taxes on these items even if that would cause the World Bank to stop congratulating Haiti for its “remarkable results.”

As production in the world’s economy spirals down and price inflation spirals up, the big capitalists use all their powers to protect their investments by shifting the burden onto their working classes and onto countries like Haiti.

Haiti’s farmers were bankrupted by the free food coming from all the aid programs over the past 20 years. The pressure of the IMF and World Bank for Haiti to only make “profitable” investments has kept it from developing its tremendous

agricultural potential.

Of the 420,000 tonnes of rice Haitians consume yearly, 340,000 tonnes are imported. Of the 31 million eggs the Haitian population eats monthly, 30 million are imported from the Dominican Republic. About 80 percent of farmers earn less than 135 dollars a year.

These types of protests have overthrown Haitian governments in the past. If President Préval and Prime Minister Alexis don’t do anything concrete—other than demanding respect for private property—they are going to face more serious mass protests. □

Ban on travel to Cuba creates ‘enforcement and public relations dilemma’

By Cheryl LaBash

What if travel to Cuba is banned, but people exercise their rights and go there anyway? “An enforcement and public relations dilemma” is created!

So says a report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, “GAO-08-80 Cuba Embargo,” released in November 2007. Buried on page 56 of the 91-page document, the U.S. agencies responsible for enforcing the tightened travel restrictions on U.S. residents admit they are failing. Their cruel measures have turned into their opposite and the solidarity movement is winning!

A section titled “Divided U.S. Public Opinion Presents Enforcement Challenges” reports that, “Lack of public support for the embargo, coupled with the controversial nature of recent rule changes, has contributed to widespread, small-scale violations.”

Cuban-Americans in particular are outraged by new rules that further divide families, allowing visits to Cuba only once every three years, defining and limiting who is considered a family member and restricting financial remittances and baggage weight when travel is allowed.

Academics, whose educational programs and research with their counterparts in Cuba are now blocked; religious organizations like the National Council of Churches, whose license to travel was canceled; and the persistent annual travel challenges that are publicly traveling to and from Cuba contribute to that “enforcement and public relations dilemma.”

U.S. representatives Barbara Lee and Charles Rangel asked the GAO to study government rule changes from 2001 to 2005 and the impact on exports, travel, cash transfers and gifts to Cuba; U.S.

agencies’ activities and workloads related to the enforcement; and factors affecting the enforcement of the blockade of Cuba.

The report documents the history of the U.S. blockade from 1960 to 2007. It proves the sanctions and restrictions on Cuba are unprecedented and are applied only to Cuba and not to any other country.

Significantly, the report shows that as the sanctions tightened, international support for Cuba grew. In 1992, 59 countries voted in the United Nations against the U.S. blockade, but by 2007 that number had increased to 184. Throughout all those years no more than three other countries voted with the U.S., the only consistent U.S. ally against Cuba being Israel.

Although mentioning the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 and the 1978 bombing of the Cuban Mission to the U.N. in New York and the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., the report is otherwise silent on the U.S.-backed and funded war of terror against the socialist government of Cuba and the Cuban people. This has included hotel bombings, assassination attempts, biological warfare and the first midair bombing of a civilian aircraft, Cubana 455, killing 73 innocent civilians in 1976.

The U.S. government refused to stop these violations of international law organized from bases in Florida, necessitating five dedicated Cuban men to observe and give early warning of attacks planned in Florida against their homeland. These men, known as the Cuban Five, are unjustly imprisoned in the U.S. while the CIA agent who planned the bombing of Cubana 455, Luis Posada Carriles, walks free in Miami today.

The enforcement and public relations dilemma faced by the U.S. Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) and oth-

er U.S. government agencies is a victory for Cuba and all the world’s peoples in a battle of ideas between a socialist economic system that provides doctors to the world, and a capitalist one that sends occupation armies and bombs around the world and turns every human need and want into a commodity for sale and profit.

This victory is being won by the brigadistas and caravanistas who travel every year to Cuba, carrying computers or medical supplies across the border from Texas into Mexico and returning past U.S. government agents at the Mexican and Canadian borders, openly declaring their travel to Cuba. It is won by every person who received a letter from OFAC and did

not negotiate a settlement, but requested a public hearing instead.

The local demonstrations, meetings, film showings, resolutions, letters to the editor and efforts to free the Cuban Five and expose the double standard that protects Posada Carriles—every step that breaks not only the travel ban but the media blockade with facts about Cuba helps to expand that “dilemma.”

The 2008 travel challenges will return from Cuba on July 14. Go to www.pastors-forpeace.org for more information on the caravans. For the Venceremos Brigade, e-mail vbrigade@yahoo.com or call 212-560-4360. For the Labor Exchange, e-mail laborexchange@aol.com. □

CZECH REPUBLIC

Communist Youth Union fights state repression

The Communist Youth Union (KSM) of the Czech Republic held its 8th Congress on March 22-23 in Prague, meeting under the slogan, “Communists in the front line in the struggle for the rights of the majority of the youth, for peace and socialism!”

The congress was held only a few days after the Municipal Court of Prague supported the Ministry of the Interior in its reactionary decision to dissolve the organization of the young communists. The Congress of the KSM denounced the anti-communist and anti-democratic attacks of the state power against the young communists and has appealed to all the democratic forces to resist these attacks.

The congress also discussed the activi-

ties of the young communists against a plan to construct a U.S. military base in Czech Republic. The KSM has denounced this plan from the very beginning and was the first organization to initiate a public campaign against the base’s possible construction, which included demonstrations, petitions, debates, meetings, cultural activities, etc. The KSM says it intends to organize further activities in the struggle against the military base.

The KSM has also protested the right-wing government’s proposal to introduce fees for university studies. At the congress the KSM declared defense of the right for free education one of the group’s priorities.

—John Catalinotto

Fracasa asalto contra el ejército Mahdi por fuerzas iraquíes apoyadas por los EEUU

Por John Catalinotto

Un asalto de las tropas iraquíes promovido por los EEUU contra rivales del primer ministro Nuri al-Maliki's mató a 605 iraquíes y algunas tropas estadounidenses pero no logró abatir al ejército de Mahdi, su verdadero objetivo.

Conducido por el clérigo chiita Moqtada al-Sadr, el ejército Mahdi es la fuerza armada no gubernamental más grande, con tropas procedentes de la población más pobre de la comunidad chiita.

Hubo fuertes combates por cinco días en la ciudad sureña de Basora, centro de producción petrolífera. También se extendió a vecindarios chiitas de Bagdad como la ciudad de Sadr. El ejército Mahdi y las tropas del gobierno o de los EEUU sostuvieron batallas en muchas partes del país, incluyendo Nasiriyah, Hilla, Al-Amarah y otros lugares más. Hasta la "zona verde" fortificada en la capital llegaron los ataques de morteros.

El primer ministro al-Maliki había ido a Basora para exigir que se entregaran los comandantes del ejército Mahdi y dejaran las armas dentro de 72 horas o les destruiría. En su lugar, las fuerzas aéreas estadounidense y británica tuvieron que intervenir para evitar que el ejército Mahdi tomara posiciones del gobierno iraquí. Al-Maliki fue evacuado por un helicóptero de los EEUU el 30 de marzo, según el informe de la resistencia de Iraq.

El ejército Mahdi prevaleció por todas

partes. En algunas áreas hizo huir al ejército títere.

El 31 de marzo al-Sadr ordenó al ejército Mahdi obedecer un alto al fuego. Pero dijo que sus fuerzas rechazarían entregar sus armas mientras los EEUU ocuparan Iraq. Al-Sadr también exigió que el gobierno otorgara una amnistía general al ejército Mahdi, libere a todos los miembros encarcelados de esa fuerza que no hayan sido condenados por crímenes, y trajera "a la gente desplazada que ha huido de sus hogares como resultado de las operaciones militares."

El ataque contra el ejército Mahdi fue una versión a pequeña escala de los ataques de EEUU e Israel contra el Líbano en el verano de 2006, cuando las fuerzas conducidas por Hizbolá rechazaron al poderoso ejército israelí. Un oficial del títere ministerio interior iraquí dijo sin embargo, que "luego del asalto fracasado, el gobierno había despedido a 150 oficiales de policía y a 400 policías por rehusar luchar en el conflicto." (New York Times, 1º de abril)

Una derrota para la ocupación EEUU

Al enfrentar un desastre militar, el gobierno de los EEUU y el Pentágono mantuvieron que el ataque fue totalmente la iniciativa del gobierno de al-Maliki. Según el New York Times sin embargo, EEUU había estado forzando a al-Maliki para que atacara al ejército Mahdi, el cual Washington considera un aliado demasia-

do cercano a Irán. Bush ha denominado los combates como "un momento definitivo" en Irak". (31 de marzo)

La negación de los EEUU fue también expuesta como una mentira por la intervención del poder aéreo de los EEUU y Bretaña. Por todos lados en Basora las bombas cayeron matando a iraquíes civiles descritos en declaraciones del Pentágono como "milicianos pandilleros".

La versión del régimen de al-Maliki fue la declaración de que las tropas iraquíes no estaban atacando al ejército Mahdi, sino a "elementos criminales" que se habían apoderado de Basora. Es obvio que al-Maliki quedó debilitado como resultado del fallido asalto, y al-Sadr salió fortalecido. Tanto al-Maliki como la embajada de los EEUU tuvieron que darle gracias a al-Sadr por declarar el cese al fuego.

Todo esto puede tener un impacto en la votación nacional de octubre. Incluso antes de los combates, se esperaba que el grupo de al-Sadr gane por amplio margen.

La estrategia inicial de Washington para conquistar a Irak basada en el "terror y asombro", colapsó hace tiempo. Una vez que emergió la resistencia, el Pentágono resultó ser incapaz de ganar, asegurar y estabilizar al país y explotar sus recursos petroleros.

Rápidamente EEUU cambió la estrategia de "terror y asombro" a tácticas de "dividir y conquistar". Mientras que Washington fracasó en conquistar a Irak, tuvo éxito en dividir a los iraquíes.

Algunas organizaciones importantes chiitas que habían estado opuestas al gobierno de Saddam Hussein se unieron al régimen títere.

En las zonas predominantemente sunitas, la heroica resistencia de fuerzas nacionalistas encabezadas por islámicos y miembros del partido Baath impidieron al Pentágono asegurar y estabilizar a Irak. Pero hasta ahora, las fuerzas de ocupación de los EEUU han podido atrincherarse y mantenerse mientras que el estado de ánimo entre las tropas estadounidenses sigue decayendo.

En todo esto el ejército Mahdi y al-Sadr han jugado un papel contradictorio. Por un lado, las bases del ejército Mahdi están en contra de la ocupación. Washington les ha atacado tanto con palabras como con armas, llamándoles títeres de Irán.

Por otro lado, en vez de devolver el fuego a los ocupantes estadounidenses y sus aliados locales, el ejército Mahdi ha aceptado un papel en el gobierno títere de Maliki. La pregunta del momento es: ¿Irá el ataque directo de al-Maliki y EEUU a forzar al ejército Mahdi acercarse al movimiento de resistencia iraquí?

En medio de este tumulto y confusión en Irak, el general estadounidense David Petraeus viene a Washington para testificar en el congreso el 8-9 de abril sobre "el éxito de la oleada de tropas" y para pedir más fondos para una guerra criminal que ya ha costado las vidas de un millón de iraquíes y de 4.300 soldados de los EEUU. □

Activista veterano mandado a prisión federal

Por Sara Flounders
Nueva York

Ed Lewinson tiene 78 años y es ciego. El 2 de abril él sale para la prisión federal en Elkton, Ohio para cumplir una sentencia de 90 días en prisión debida a su arresto en el 2007 por protestar la Escuela de las Américas (SOA, la escuela estadounidense de tortura) en Ft. Benning, Ga.

Lewinson es uno de una docena de per-

sonas que fueron detenid@s en la manifestación de SOA Watch por atravesar la línea que separa la base militar de la zona civil. Más de 20.000 personas participaron en la protesta anual el noviembre pasado. Fue la cuarta vez que Ed fue detenido en estas protestas en Ft. Benning. Cuando le fue ofrecida una sentencia más indulgente, él insistió en que tod@s l@s defendid@s sean tratad@s y sentenciad@s igualmente.

Aunque Lewinson es ciego de nacimien-

to, siempre ha estado determinado a participar plenamente en las luchas políticas y en todos los aspectos de la vida. Él ha sido activista político por casi 60 años y ha estado detenido numerosas veces por huelgas de brazos caídos y acciones de desobediencia civil, y ha participado en cientos de líneas de piquete, manifestaciones y asambleas.

Está activo en las luchas políticas en Newark con la Organización del Pueblo para el Progreso y la Acción para la Paz de Nueva Jersey. Ha sido un activo voluntario en el Centro de Acción Internacional por 14 años desde que asistió por primera vez a un evento que ligaba a la guerra por riquezas y ganancias para pocas personas con la miseria y la pobreza de millones.

Asistió a la secundaria de Detroit que se llama Northern High School, la única escuela en la región que ofrecía una clase de Braille. L@s estudiantes de Northern eran predominantemente negr@s, y las primeras lecciones sobre derechos civiles que aprendió Lewinson fueron resultado de escuchar los relatos de sus compañer@s de clase.

En 1949, a la edad de 19 años, Lewinson participó con el Congreso de Igualdad Racial (CORE), una organización pionera en derechos civiles, en las huelgas de bra-



MO FOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Ed Lewinson
y Lucius Walker

zos caídos y luchas para abolir la segregación del Terminal de Autobuses de Greyhound en Washington, D.C.

A principios de los años 60, participó en huelgas de brazos caídos para abolir la segregación de restaurantes en la Ruta 40 de la carretera Baltimore-Washington. En Brooklyn, participó en acciones para abolir la segregación en la vivienda, y formó parte de las primeras luchas

del sindicato 1199 para organizar a l@s trabajador@s de hospitales.

Durante las acciones masivas de desobediencia civil para detener la ejecución de Mumia Abu-Jamal, Lewinson fue detenido dos veces — una en Filadelfia frente a la Campana de la Libertad, y otra vez en Washington, D.C.

Él participó en acciones para terminar con las terribles sanciones estadounidenses contra Irak, incluyendo hacer varios viajes difíciles a Irak con delegaciones del Centro de Acción Internacional para llevar medicinas urgentemente necesitadas, y también viajó varios veces a Cuba con los Pastores para la Paz y el Centro de Acción Internacional para romper el bloqueo. También él ha viajado a Corea del Norte.

El Centro de Acción Internacional organizó un evento de solidaridad el 1º de abril para despedir a Lewinson en Nueva York. □

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- Trabajos y viviendas para tod@s, no más despidos y pérdidas de nuestros hogares.
- No a la Guerra en Irak.
- No a la deportación de Flor Crisóstomo; asilo político para Víctor Toro.
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